

Check out the difference-making you've been a part of this year

2024 Impact Report



southridge



Contents

*Inspiration, Connection,
Family Ministry*

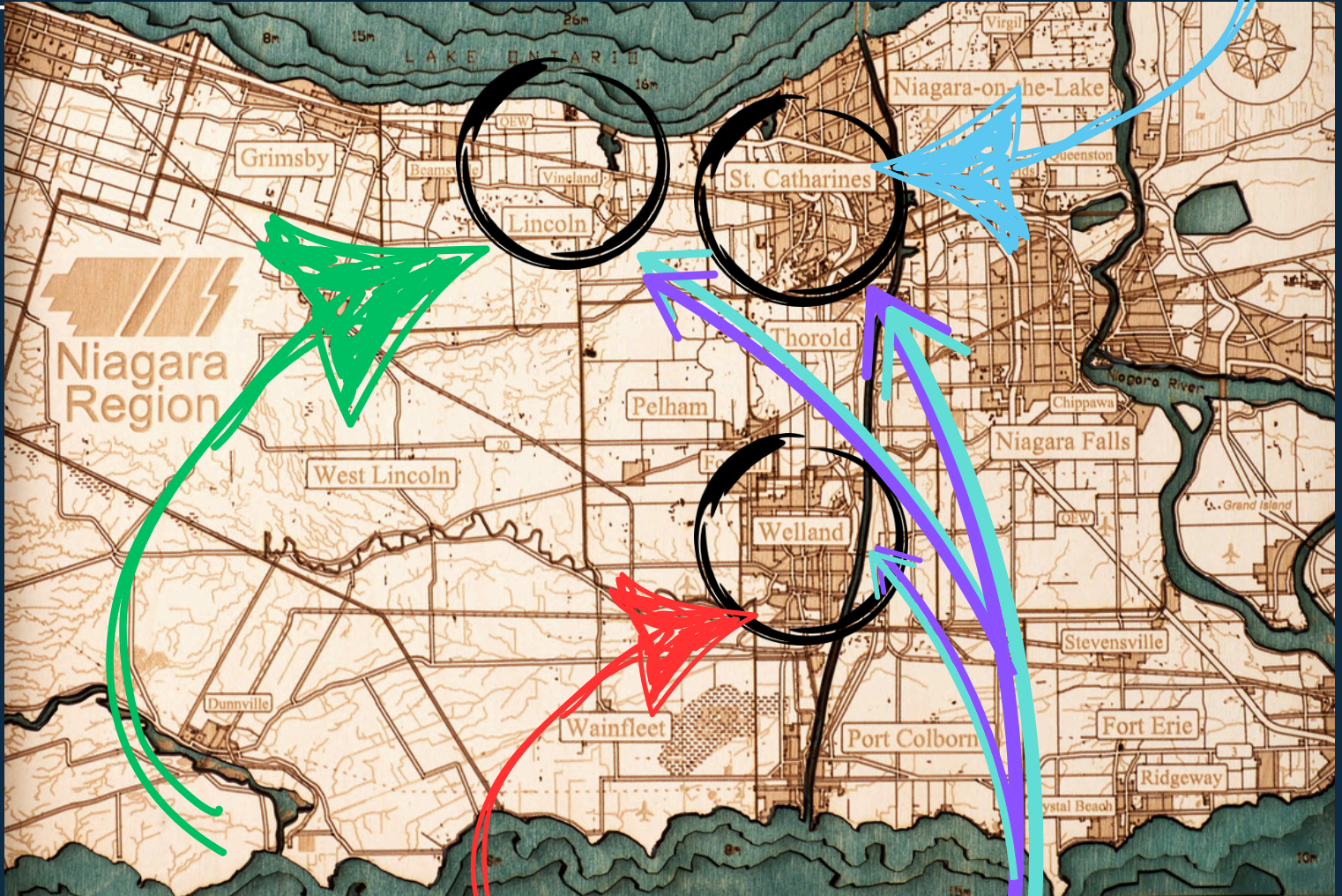
Page 3-4

*About
Action*

Page 5

*Homelessness
Services*

Page 6-7



*Caribbean-
Canadian
Community*

Page 8-9

*Food and
Housing
Insecurity*

Page 10-11

*Becoming Global
Good
Compassion
Relatives*

Page 12-13

Page 14

Inspiration, Connection, Family Ministry



Next-Gen Band

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WE WERE LED IN MUSICAL WORSHIP, IN ALL THREE LOCATIONS, BY A BAND MADE UP OF SOME OF OUR YOUTH MUSICIANS!

28 BAPTISMS

We had 28 individuals make the decision to be baptized this year! It's been a particularly busy fall, celebrating and sharing the stories of God's work in peoples lives.

Family Ministry

In 2024, our kids and youth continued to grow in their relationship with Jesus in so many meaningful ways!

We've been using the One Story Curriculum, and it's been amazing to see how it's impacting our young ones. For our Jr. Kids, we're now going through the scope and sequence for the second time, which is such an exciting milestone. We're really in a groove of helping them discover the stories of Jesus and experiencing His love.

Meanwhile, our Sr. Kids have been diving into a new Big Idea each week. Some of the topics they explored this fall include 'Creation', 'Trust', 'Hearing God', and understanding that Jesus is the Son of God.

Beyond our Sunday morning experiences, our Sr. Kids continued to join us for worship on Sunday mornings. This has been a regular rhythm for our church over the past few years, and it's been such a blessing. It gives our kids a chance to feel connected to the larger church community and to learn from their parents and the entire congregation about what it means to worship.

-Jenn S.
Southridge
Kid's Pastor

Life Story - Lilly

During a baptism service in Welland, Tom asked the room why we do baptisms. Lilly, (age 6) raised her hand and said, "Because we wash away our sins and have a new life in Jesus."



Life Story - Easton

In St. Catharines, during a Sr. Kids discussion about making disciples, Jenn asked if we get anything in return for making disciples. Easton, age 7, put up his hand and shouted out, "WE DO IT FOR FREE!"

3



313 People Gathered
in 31 Life Groups

Across all locations Life Groups gathered at various intervals through the ministry year, enjoying Life together as they exercised the call to **Eat** together, **Pray** together, and **Love** together.

Fully integrated service

One of the most exciting new experiences this year was during the summer long weekend when we held a **FULLY INTEGRATED SERVICE** with all the kids participating in the entire service!

The service started with one of our kids leading us in prayer, and our kids leading the actions to 'Joy' by Rend Collective, a favourite of ours!

We engaged in a *posture prayer*, where we used our bodies to pray in different ways—reaching out, receiving, and sharing. We learned about how

GOD PARTNERS WITH US IN SMALL THINGS TO MAKE A BIG IMPACT. To help see this impact tangibly, everyone wrote the name of a person or a place they wanted to share Jesus that week on a strip of paper. We then made a paper chain to show how small actions, when joined together, can create eternal impact.



ANCHOR CAUSES

Our kids engaged in the anchor causes of our community at *Norm's Place* and services, *Caribbean Centre* and **HARVEST KITCHEN!**



Events

This year **Natalie Frisk**, one of the writers of our curriculum, came and to equip our volunteers. At our 2024 Volunteer Kickoff, we also heard from **Tim Penner** and **Jo Rivard**, authors of the **TINY TRUTHS BIBLE**, who shared their thoughts on prayer and how we can pray with our eyes open—both metaphorically and physically!

Youth

This year our youth experienced growth and connection. They participated in **WINTER RETREATS AT CAMP CROSSROADS**, competed in Blender challenges (including eating mealworms!) and baking competitions. Our Sr. Youth and leaders also dove deep into the Bible through a

Bible Intensive

during our Thursday and Friday youth nights. In September, our Sr. youth kicked off their ministry season with a **TWO-NIGHT RETREAT AT JORDAN CAMPGROUND** where they spent time building relationships and growing in their faith.

211 KIDS AND YOUTH VOLUNTEERS MAKE OUR WEEKLY SUNDAY MORNING AND MID-WEEK EXPERIENCES HAPPEN!



A few of our youth experiences...

About Southridge Action

At Southridge Community Church, we are committed to loving God by loving our neighbour. We do this by getting to know each other (often over meals or games!), learning from our differences and celebrating in our commonalities, and serving each other's needs. It takes a whole community to do this work together, and we're thankful for the ways you contribute your life to this!

This is the overarching shape of these efforts through our Anchor Causes:

St. Catharines – *Homelessness Services*

For nearly 20 years our community has served among people experiencing homelessness. This has grown to offer a holistic range of supports for whatever stage of homeless someone may be experiencing, including our 55-bed emergency hostel (Southridge Shelter), coaching, diversion, assertive street outreach, and housing supports including Home for Good and Housing First workers. We integrate these supports with community through ongoing programs like Norm's Place (a café and meeting space), events, and Community Connect social support programs.

Vineland – *Caribbean-Canadian Community*

Over the past 12 years we have been drawing together as an increasingly integrated Caribbean-Canadian community in Vineland. As these friendships have grown, so have the efforts to meet the needs of the many in our community who serve as migrant farmworkers. This includes our Caribbean Centre (featuring an on-site health clinic, legal clinic, thrift shop, social drop-in), as well as a transportation team for follow-up medical appointments, and social events like bowling nights, cricket tournaments, evening Caribbean-Canadian church services, all intending to bring Caribbean and Canadian community members together and to support each other.

Welland – *Food and Housing Insecurity*

During our 15 years in Welland, we have had the privilege of getting to know friends in the community experiencing disproportionate challenges from the lack of affordability of food and housing. We currently work to meet these needs together through food security supports through monthly 'Collective Kitchen' cooking sessions together and weekly 'Harvest Kitchen' community dinners, as well as through our community garden and the fresh produce market which we ran this year. We are growing together in friendship in these spaces, and through our Community Connect social support program and its social events.

All Locations – *Becoming Good Relatives*

The past five years have seen the start of our attempt to set a different trajectory as a church in our impact and relationship among Indigenous Peoples, which we call our journey towards 'becoming good relatives', and which is led by a team of the same name. We have been slowly and steadily responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 'Calls to Action' through our own education, responding to invitations from local Indigenous groups like the Niagara Regional Native Centre and the land defense at 1492 Land Back Lane, and beginning to grow in relationship and accompaniment of Indigenous Peoples.

All Locations – *Global Compassion*

Our efforts to extend compassion and justice towards less financially resourced global communities is done through Compassion Canada. Compassion Canada partners with localized teams in global contexts to distribute financial resources for the support of children in their own communities. For example, Compassion Nicaragua is led by a team of Nicaraguans who receive the funds from Compassion Canada to operate their incredible and highly accountable Child Sponsorship and Child Survival Programs. At Southridge, we are involved as individual households in supporting Child Sponsorship, and as a community in supporting Child Survival Programs.



Homelessness Services



St. Catharines

[By Carol T. and Vicky R., Southridge community members and Community Connect leaders]

In our collective experience over two decades, we've experienced friendship hugely disrupting factors which contribute to cycles of homelessness, like isolation and loneliness,

our intention is to build friendships between current and former Shelter residents and folks from our church community to form a bit more of a personal connection. We do this by regularly participating in community events and, to put it simply, looking for connections between people who have and have not experienced homelessness. We are always looking for folks that seem like they would be a great fit for one another and we try and give that connection a little nudge.

There are so many beautiful connections in our community, but here are just some of the many ways that these "unlikely friendships" have looked this year:

Jan and Colleen cooking together and playing crib, Linda, Patience and Rebecca thrifting to find items for their new home, Rob and Steven

working through challenging days with phone calls and check-ins. Lorri teaching Pauline crokinole on Christmas day. Chris and Rita enjoyed a concert together in Toronto.

Many folks experiencing their friends joining them at Norms, Euchre night, fireworks on the beach or other special events. Rose and Wendy meeting for coffee at a local café, Linda and Elaine and Diane working through mobility challenges to get to Ladies' Coffee together (which is never easy, I might add).

Becky and Nancy attending summer BBQs together, Rita making daily calls to Carol when her dad passed away, Geraldine hosting Diane for dinners, Dean and Shawn catching up while they go to appointments together, Paul and David driving to church and attending Life Group together, Tracey and Karen enjoying special events with one another as their friendship grows, Lorri encouraging Vicky about her new photography business.

Many people simply sitting together and listening to each other.

These are ways that we are working to contribute to cycles of homelessness and cycles of misunderstanding broken, and are learning to reflect the image of Jesus to each other.

-Carol T. and Vicky R.

So, it's like this...

Our Homelessness Services program in 2024:

- **Housing Focused Shelter** ('Southridge Shelter')
- **Housing Programs** ('Housing First' and 'Home for Good')
- **Street Outreach** ('Niagara Assertive Street Outreach')
- **After Hours Shelter Placement Line**
- **Shelter Diversion**
- **Community Life** for Current and Former Residents
 - Norm's Place
 - Ladies' Coffee
 - Men's Coffee
 - Devotions
 - Special Events (BBQs, Blue Jays games, etc,)

STAFF-OPERATED (and VOLUNTEER-SUPPORTED)

INTEGRATED SPACES (CURRENT and FORMER RESIDENTS with CHURCH COMMUNITY)

Shelter:
19,411
BED NIGHTS
PROVIDED TO
528
INDIVIDUALS

Community Connect

We had 58 people engaged in one-on-one, intentional friendships, experiencing reciprocity, healing and belonging

Our team successfully **HOUSED 167** clients from shelter, including:

- 89 moved into private market rentals
- 11 became participants in Housing First programming
- 45 were reunited with family and returned home

NORM'S

Celebrated **1** year! Norm's is now open Mondays and Wednesdays for dinner and authentic, welcoming community.

Did You Know?

Through our Housing First programming, the team supported **42** new clients moving into their own homes. The team also supported **37** housed clients facing imminent eviction to retain their housing through intensive support. **76** clients were supported through rent subsidies and case management.



275 NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED CHRISTMAS DINNER

6,866 Volunteer hours served in 2024

- Front desk - 2,992 hours
- Kitchen - 2,904 hours
- Events - 970 hours

\$65,108

SOUTHRIDGE INVESTMENT TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN 2024

\$2,318,985

REGIONAL FUNDING TOWARDS SOUTHRIDGE'S HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN 2024

Caribbean-Canadian Community



Vineland Location

[By Nate D., Southridge Action Pastor]

“Caribbean people, when we worship, we LOVE the music!”

On alternating Sundays this past year from April through September, our Southridge Vineland location was a hub of Caribbean-Canadian connection, as well as a space for social services in support of the Caribbean migrant farmworker members of our community here in Niagara. On these nights the health clinic, massage therapy, legal clinic, and drop-in space are all buzzing with activity. However, on select Sundays our morning service was moved to the evening time as well, and was led musically by a band comprised of Canadian, Jamaican, Trinidadian and Dominican musicians and worship leaders.

Esther, a Canadian band leader, named the she’s experienced, “because I get to make music, I get to build friendships, and I get to eat fun food! It’s been particularly great getting to know the folks who are in the band. I love being able to jam in a freestyle way, making music together in worship of our God, and I love seeing folks (especially kids) feeling free to get into the music as well.”

Lenford, a Jamaican community and band member, similarly affirms the beauty of the children being a part of it and states, “It’s a beautiful time together with one another.” He continues:

“That’s how God wants us to live! As one people, you know, one Church!”

It’s not the easiest thing to bring people from different backgrounds together in this way, but it’s worth it! As Curt, a Jamaican-Canadian band leader states, “Coming together as a team in fellowship with the [Caribbean and Canadian] communities was both challenging and rewarding

as we did our best to bridge cultural gaps and share the love of Jesus”

As Lenford says, “Every year gets better and better!”

-Nate D.

So, it's like this...

Our Caribbean-Canadian community in 2024:

- **Caribbean Centre** (community centre) was held on Sunday nights to support and connect (featuring a Health Clinic; Legal Clinic; Thrift Shop; Social Drop-In Room)
- **Events** as a Caribbean-Canadian community (Welcome Concert; Cricket Tournament; Bowling Tournament; BBQ; Caribbean-Canadian Church Services; Harvest Celebration)
- **Community Connect** (fostering and supporting Caribbean-Canadian friendship connections)



3 TROPHIES AWARDED:
FOR BOWLING, CRICKET,
AND DOMINOES!

Did You Know?
The **4** Caribbean countries most significantly represented in our community this year were Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, St. Vincent

\$27,320.82

**2024
CARIBBEAN-
CANADIAN
COMMUNITY
INVESTMENT**

"You all treat us like family!"
-Bobby C.

Southridge Community member and Trinidadian Farmworker

"Everybody from the Southridge, I want to tell you many, many thanks! You guys are doing a tremendous thing for us, it's more than tongues can tell."

-Dennis
Southridge Community member and Jamaican Farmworker

196

**CLIENT VISITS
AT OUR HEALTH CLINIC**

205

**RIDES
TO FOLLOW-UP
SPECIALIST
APPOINTMENTS**



Interesting Fact

Our health clinic provided check-ups from DOCTORS, NURSE PRACTITIONERS, and NURSES, as well as MASSAGE THERAPY and DIETICIAN SERVICES on-site at our Vineland location.



Food and Housing Insecurity



Welland Location

[By Joshua F., Collective Kitchen participant]

Collective Kitchen is a group of great folks.

We all pitch in a couple bucks and get a bunch of ingredients together and we have several different recipes every couple of weeks. The recipes swap out. We pick our favourites and they kind of move around. We pick a partner, we get together and we start cooking! And for a couple of hours we're baking, we're cooking, we're mixing, chopping, slicing, and making some pretty awesome meals... The vibe at Collective Kitchen is wholesome, and energetic for sure!

We kind of get into the groove, we cook, we talk, we laugh, we make meals, and it's nice.

And then, once we're about 90% of the way through, once everything's all kind of cooked up, we all get together, we say a prayer, and we all have lunch together. We talk a little about life, experiences, and have a nice communal time. And afterwards, we head right back to the kitchen, we clean everything up spic and span, and put our meals in little containers, and then all end up taking home a bundle of containers (there's also volunteers

that just do it for the sake of helping, and their enjoyment of cooking)! When I first heard of it and just kind of walked in the doors blindly, it was very inviting. Now I've been there, oh gosh I don't know how many times now, a lot. I eat best with the food I get from the Kitchen, than I normally would.

I normally live off peanut butter sandwiches if I'm doing stuff just by myself, so it is really helpful having these wonderful meals.

And, honestly, it's a lot cheaper than buying the ingredients by yourself, and, you know, doing it all by yourself, it's a lot cheaper. If you enjoy cooking, enjoy having awesome meals, and still being on the cheaper side of things and saving a buck or two, I would definitely recommend it, it has been a lot of fun. And, I'm a bit of a cook back home, but I definitely get more enjoyment out of Collective Kitchen than I would by myself." - Joshua, community member and Collective Kitchen participant

-Joshua F.

So, it's like this...

Our food security program in 2024:

- **Harvest Kitchen** community dinners happened every Friday throughout the year (52 Fridays together!)
- **Collective Kitchen** cooking groups happened a few times monthly, with morning and evening sessions
- **Community Garden**, on site at the church, supported by a group of volunteers, grew vegetables for our kitchen programs! Also, a monthly produce market at Harvest Kitchen
- **Community Connect** created social connections between people to reduce isolation and foster mutual support
- **Second Sundays**, a monthly potluck after our Sunday morning church service, were started as a way to further connect people

4,180
MEALS SERVED
AT
HARVEST
KITCHEN



2,592 Food security-related
volunteer hours
served in 2024

Interesting Fact

At our 'Harvest Kitchen' community dinners, hosting **15** volunteers and **70** guests every Friday throughout the year, EVERYBODY eats! Volunteers take turns with their work to join our guests for a delicious meal and great conversation! Eating together is one of the best ways to get to know and express value in each other.



Becoming Good Relatives



[By Rachel S., Southridge Community Member and Becoming Good Relatives leader]

What's it like participating at the Native Centre drum circle?

When we arrive at the Niagara Regional Native Centre, we are served a meal at the buffet and find a table to sit at on the edges of the large hall. You can't always tell who comes from an Indigenous background and culture and who doesn't, and the Native Centre (also called a 'Friendship Centre') is for everyone to connect. We say hello and chat with the people near us. When it's time for the drum circle, the women go to the adjacent room, while the men remain in the gym, gathered around the big drum. At some point before the drumming begins, everyone is offered an opportunity to smudge as an act of mindfulness. Smudging is a spiritual practice to connect us with our Creator and with ourselves that involves wafting smoke from sage, sweetgrass, or cedar. The women sit in a circle, getting out their traditional drums or shakers, and as more trickle in, the circle expands and welcomes each one.

A sacred smooth stone is passed around as we take turns saying our names and sharing something about our day.

Then the leader will ask what song we want to start with. Community members call out suggestions and help each other remember how the song goes, identifying those who are familiar with the song to lead the call and response. With that, we all stand up as the drum beat begins! We have a lot of fun learning the sounds as we go. Stories and teachings are shared in between songs, along with much laughter.

Everyone is valued and invited to participate as they are able.

Sometimes, near the end, the women like to go out and listen to the men's circle to encourage them. Time flies by, and we leave grateful to have been a part of this community.

-Rachel S.

So, it's like this...

Did You Know?

Our Becoming Good Relatives program in 2024:

- **1492 Land Defense Supports** (we visited the Land Defenders at 1492 Land Back Lane land defense monthly from August 2020 until the site was secure enough that they moved home in July 2024)
- **Becoming Good Relatives Retreat** (we experienced a weekend retreat in January 2023 with Anishinaabe writer Patty Krawec and Haudenosaunee leader Adrian Jacobs)
- **Drum Circle at NRNC** (with the end of the visits to Land Back our BGR team moved to connecting at the Niagara Regional Native Centre instead)
- **Hope Lives: Becoming Good Relatives** (our annual fall series focused on the relationship between the Church and Indigenous Peoples)
- **Events** (we attended events held by the local Indigenous community, such as the fall Powwow)

The land defense at 1492 Land Back Lane began in July of 2020, and Southridge responded to the request for support through hot meals by September. Our community visited and shared meals at least once a month for the next

44 MONTHS

until April 2024, when the Land Defenders had stabilized their resistance enough to be able to safely move back home.

Quotes from Land Back

"Well, I don't think it's unknown how natives feel, or did feel, about churches...and now it's done a complete 180 in my eyes...This is like one of the first times I've seen a change. Where people are actually working together from different communities..."

-Dex W.

Haudenosaunee Land Defender at 1492 Land Back Lane

"The people out here [at 1492 Land Back Lane] have invited me with open arms. I've never felt judged out here, I've never felt afraid out here...I think the best way to learn is to just see it yourself..."

-Elaine D.

Southridge Community Member and Becoming Good Relatives leader



127 SOUTHRIDGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS SIGNED UP FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES FOLLOWING THE HOPE LIVES SERIES

"When the Survivors asked all of Canada to be part of dealing with the wrongs of the past and to bring healing to the present generation, this is an act of grace and forgiveness."

Adrian Jacobs - Haudenosaunee community leader

\$17,039.82

2024 BECOMING GOOD RELATIVES INVESTMENT

Global Compassion



All Locations

[By Regina, a Child Survival Program Participant in Indonesia]

Shalom! My name is Regina,

and I am a 28-year-old mother. My husband, Arfa, and I have two children. Our firstborn is a boy, Giorby, and the youngest is an 8-month-old baby girl, Gricelin. She is one of the Survival participants.

We are grateful to be part of Survival programming. Both of our children have been growing well. Praise the Lord, who always takes care of us. Our house is in a small village. Our house is a humble one, but it is God's blessing for our hard work. We have cold weather here. There is a volcano and a lake. The volcanic soil is suitable for horticultural crops. Most of the villagers here are farmers and labourers who have to transport crops such as vegetables, herbs and so on.

As a labourer on the farms, [my husband] earns IDR 2,000,000 [approximately C\$166] per month. We also rent a field to grow vegetables and herbs. My husband is a responsible man who always tries his best to provide for our family's well-being. We believe the

Lord Jesus will always help us. I am a homemaker who mostly stays at home...

It is a huge blessing for us to have this Survival programming in our village.

We had prayed for such a ministry before God finally granted our prayers. We can't stop giving thanks, especially now that our baby girl, Gricelin, can participate in the program. Each program benefits us a lot...Our implementer has educated us on prenatal care, newborn care and childcare. There are so many significant lessons for our family's physical and spiritual growth...

We would like to thank all our sponsors and donors for supporting us. We hope that more children get a chance to receive this blessing. We keep you all in our prayers. God bless you. Amen.

-Regina

How Does it Work?

Similar to Southridge's systemic and relational work in our local communities in Niagara, through Compassion local churches live in loving relationship with the people they are supporting in their neighbourhood. Southridge is like the silent partner, financially supporting them behind the scenes. **Many Southridge households also personally support individual children through Compassion's child sponsorship, and the total amount of financial support sent through these sponsorships is actually the larger portion of financial support from the Southridge community, though it is not reflected in the Southridge church budget.**

So, it's like this...

Our Global Compassion participation in 2024:

\$63,013

4 Child Survival Programs:

- Sutiava, Nicaragua
- Valdez, Ecuador
- Bongkudai Baru, Indonesia
- Leon, Nicaragua

2024
COMPASSION
CSP TOTAL
INVESTMENT

14

Final Word

Friends, these efforts are all meant to reflect the *embodied* love of Jesus, together as a community. So, this would not be possible without you.

There's a messiness to walking with each other through our unique challenges, and across our differences, and at times it may feel like "friendship makes the difference" is not only a bit of a cheesy thing to say, but it's hard to tell if it's true. However, as we see in the Scriptures, this is all worth it even for a single person to experience the love of Jesus.

Amazingly, it *is* actually possible to see a broader systemic difference in the impacts of the communities that we are serving among.

Over the years we have experienced how community helps break cycles of homelessness. How cooking and eating together not only helps make food more affordable but also creates bonds between us that then increases our impact on the broader community. How accompanying migrant farmworkers in the small pocket of our own neighbourhood can spread into other towns. How a small church like ours can inspire other churches to increasingly join in the work to move towards a different impact among Indigenous Peoples.

And in all of it, this can be seen in the changes within many of our lives, and the lives of people that we are privileged to accompany, as we learn to see the image of Jesus in each other.

-Thank you!

Contact

Family Ministry

Jenn Surtees - jsurtees@southeridgechurch.ca

Inspiration

Tom Loewen - tloewen@southeridgechurch.ca

Connection

Jeff Martens - jmartens@southeridgechurch.ca

Action

Nate Dirks - action@southeridgechurch.ca

Website

southeridgechurch.ca

Instagram

[@southeridge_church](https://www.instagram.com/southeridge_church)

Facebook

Southridge Community Church



A photograph of a man and a woman shaking hands in a parking lot. The man is on the left, wearing a blue polo shirt, dark blue jeans, and white sneakers with red accents. The woman is on the right, wearing a dark floral patterned blouse, light blue jeans, and tan boots. They are standing on a concrete surface next to a glass door. In the background, there is a parking lot with several cars, including a silver Toyota SUV, and residential houses under a clear blue sky. The text "THANKYOU" is overlaid in large white letters, and "Southridge Community Church" is overlaid in smaller white letters below it.

THANKYOU
Southridge Community Church